

Globalization and Lusophone world. Implications for Citizenship

By Moisés de Lemos Martins

1. The lusocentric misconception

Is the idea of Lusophony, at present, a way of expressing the concept of lusotropicalism? In the representations of a lusophone supranational space of language and culture there is a lusocentric misconception⁵. Portugal has always morbidly placed itself within them, haunted as it is by how different it is, or thinks it is, within the context of other peoples, nations and cultures. Eduardo Lourenço, the great Portuguese essayist alive, says that the dream of lusophone community, “a Community of Portuguese Speaking Peoples, be it well or badly dreamed out, is by nature [...] a dream of lusiad root, structure, intent and scope” (Lourenço: 1999: 162-163).

I think, however, that Eduardo Lourenço’s wise warning does not tell in any way, the full story of the dream of Lusophony, and doesn’t even cover the whole dream that the Portuguese may have about Lusophony, as much as the Lusophone dream may for the Portuguese, fill the space of an imaginary refuge, the space of an imperial nostalgia, that today helps them to feel less alone and more visible everywhere in the world, now that the cycle of their actual imperial epic is definitely closed (Lourenço: 1983).



The Lusophone landscape

⁵ By 'lusophone world' I mean the Portuguese speaking countries. By 'Lusophony' I mean the Portuguese speaking culture.

In speaking of the dream of Lusophony, I do not think I am speaking of a small thing since that which is real, all that is real in fact, starts as a dream in culture and then becomes a cultural achievement. Indeed, in the era of the “world system” (Wallerstein, 1974, 1989, 1989), what has been increasingly gaining weight is the idea that alliances and human solidarities arise mainly due to power of the economy, to political commitments and to the technical-scientific cosmopolitanism. However, it is my belief that markets are places far more suited for competition than for solidarity. In this era of globalization of the economy, I think it makes sense, more than ever, to reverse the aphorism of Marx and accentuate the idea that the real infrastructure of society is a ‘cosa mentale’, something dreamed, and not exactly economic structures, markets and technologies (Durand, 1986, 1997).

It is my understanding, in effect, that one cannot build a living community of dead things. For example, Europe is not built as a community as a result of having one day imagined itself as coal and steel, and, more recently, as Airbus and TGV, and many more technologies. Europe can only become established on the basis of it plural imaginary, i.e. in the multiplicity of its cultures.

Moreover, what is at stake in the lusophone idea is a symbolic struggle for the division of the international community into cultural areas, giving rise to what Samuel Huntington (2001) called culture wars (clashes of civilizations). However, the political-cultural war that Samuel Huntington refers to was identified and anticipated, in the thirties of last century by Gilberto Freyre, the first thinker “to formulate a general theory of the phenomenon of the meeting of ethnicities and cultures within the unifying framework of the European settlement’s political model” (Moreira, 2000: 18). Lusotropicalism proposed a regional culturalism, when it ascertained that the world had become for the first time globalised and that by mastering the seas, Western History had also for the first time become Universal History (Lourenço, 1990: 16). What should be noted above all, is that Lusotropicalism did not propose a ‘Portuguese way of being in the world’, which was what the Salazar regime adopted in the fifties and sixties in Portugal (Castelo, 1988). It proposed, rather, multiculturalism with the common denominator of a language as a homeland.

It was in *Casa-Grande e Senzala* (1933) and *Sobrados e Mucambos* (1936) that Gilberto Freyre first started to advocate the rediscovery and revaluation of “basic, vital, popular Brazil”, focusing on memories, landscapes and local food, as well as local lifestyles and habits, in short, focusing on marks of daily life in the hearts and minds: how to be born, eat, live, sleep, love, cry, pray, sing, die and be buried.

Lusophony borrows this regional and cultural bias from Lusotropicalism. Thus, in view of the unstoppable process of a cosmopolitan globalization, brought to us by the economy and technology, which relocates us, breaks boundaries, dilutes memories, virtualizes landscapes, it is the multiculturalist globalization what motivates Lusophony and is something that characterizes it particularly. Multiculturalist globalization respects the specific cultural areas. In this sense, we are dealing with a view of globalization which is paradoxically regionalist, feeding on an imaginary of living and concrete territories, landscapes and memories.

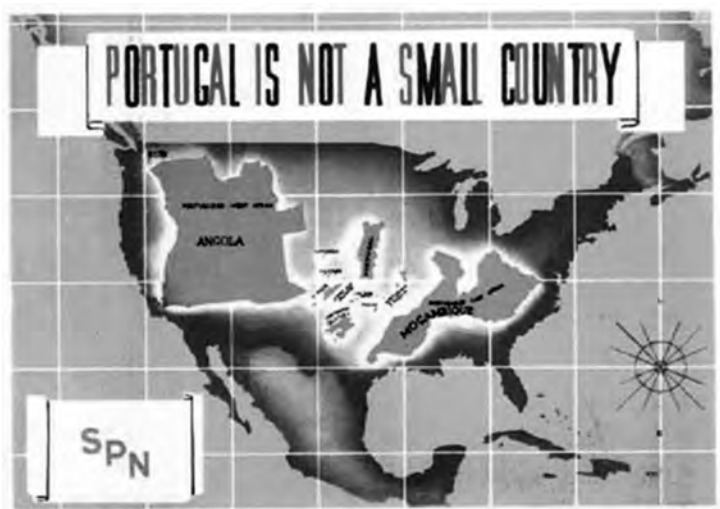
What is at stake in this symbolic struggle between cosmopolitan globalization and multiculturalist globalization is the power to define reality, as well as the power to impose internationally that definition, I mean, 'this di/vision' (Bourdieu, 1980: 65). In this perspective, the image of Lusophony is not something different from the social reality of the different national communities where this symbolic fight takes place.

In fact, the social representations of reality are not unfamiliar to the own social reality of countries that formulate them. And this is why, in my point of view, there should be a reevaluation of the representations that tend to consider the image of Lusophony as lacking not only any symbolic efficacy, but also all political effectiveness. The idea of Lusophony requires one to revisit Gilberto Freyre's lusotropicalist dream, which emerged in Brazil in the thirties of last century, and in Portugal in the fifties, however much the Salazar's *Estado Novo* enmeshed it in a colonial misconception.



This map expresses the colonial and imperialistic vision of the world between the 30s and the 60s of last century in Portugal. With all colonies covering whole Europe, Portugal is not a small country

In either case, in fact, there prevails an idea that progress and culture derive from the mixing of ethnic groups, and also from the mixture of memories, traditions and landscapes. In either case, too, there is a clear idea that it is possible to get a cultural federation with room for many States to flourish within a transnational or supranational entity.



This second map is the international version of the same idea: Portugal and its colonies covering the United States. Portugal is not a small country; and furthermore, the new combinations of races and cultures tend, in essence, to remain Portuguese

The image of Lusophony derives from this Lusotropicalist root, being essentially, in my view, its recomposition. In a post-colonial context, the image of Lusophony is equated today to a transnational community, with political and cultural purposes (Chacon, 2002). Lusotropicalism, however, still needs to be freed from a colonial meaning in which the Portuguese *Estado Novo* entangled it.

The “New World of the Tropics”, “The World which was created by the Portuguese”, to gloss Gilberto Freyre (1951), no longer envisages in Lusophony new combinations of races and cultures which tend, in essence, to “remain Lusitanian”, as was formulated by Lusotropicalism in the fifties and sixties. The “New World of the Tropics” is called upon today to express itself in terms of multiculturalism, with the common denominator of the same language. In the imaginary territory of cultures, this is how I glimpse the lusophone dream.

2. Lusophone Culture and Identity

The debate about “communication, citizenship and Lusophony” takes place in a post-colonial context. Reflecting on Lusophony in this context cannot therefore mean that one has to level out the differences between very diverse and heterogeneous countries, but rather that one actually has to consider the intricate relationship that the non-western worlds have with their former colonizers. First and foremost, one has to bear in mind that each community within the lusophone space constitutes a multicultural and heterogeneous identity. Moreover, one also has to examine the media within the context of the transnational, national and local identity strategies.

On the other hand, post-colonial circumstances reveal a world mobilised by a wide array of technologies, particularly technological devices for communication, information and leisure (the Internet, mobile phones, iPods, etc.). Reflecting on Lusophony within the larger framework of reflection on communication and citizenship nowadays entails taking these technological circumstances into account that is, discussing their cultural implications on the lusophone space (Sousa, 2000). However, one also has to take into account the way social representations that accompany the processes of social discrimination, xenophobia or nationalisms are actually built and circulated. In other words, one has to discuss the idea of social representation and its articulation with the idea of social stereotypes. Reflecting on Lusophony within the larger framework of reflection on communication and citizenship, further entails examining the social tensions both inside and outside the national communities as well as their levels of civic participation. The role of the media in the social process that leads to the creation of social stereotypes based on ethnic groups and skin colour also needs to be assessed. Within this perspective, I believe that special attention needs to be given to an analysis of the ethnic-featured urban and suburban youth sub-cultures since it is a question of analysing representations of the world and legitimating mechanisms of new cultural practices that various social groups lay claim to.

The contemporary world is essentially multicultural. In light of this, a discussion on Lusophony will have to consider communication phenomena in multicultural terms. It is however, the reality of a common language, the Portuguese language, regardless of its status – mother tongue, official language, working language, language that today unites about 230 million speakers – that gives rise to the dream of a lusophone imaginary and ultimately to the dream of a lusophone community.

In a post-colonial context, image of Lusophony therefore equates to a transnational community. Its common denominator is a shared language, but what holds it up are political-cultural purposes. It expresses itself through multiculturalism and its building blocks are interculturality. In these circumstances the debate on Lusophony cannot afford to ignore the processes of cultural 'translation'.

It does not seem to me, however, that the notion of Lusophony can be linked to a transnational community with economic purposes, since in this field both Portugal and Brazil have other frameworks to which they are attached: the European Union, in the case of Portugal and Mercosur in the case of Brazil. But I would like to highlight, on the one hand, the fact that the prevalent political-cultural purposes and strategies are expressed through multiculturalism, because there are multiple and heterogeneous realities, such as the Portuguese, the Brazilian, the Angolan, the Mozambican and other cultures (Baptista, 2000). On the other hand, these prevalent political-cultural purposes and strategies materialise through interculturality. This hybridity derives from miscegenation, that is, from the mixture, the coming together of that which is diverse and heterogeneous.

Lusophony is not therefore a reality that has already been built. The fact that 230 million individuals speak Portuguese is an excellent starting point to foster the dream of a lusophone community. But language, on its own, does not ensure such a community. The lusophone community is one that still requires building.

3. Globalization and the lusophone cultural area

Empowering itself as a dominant variable in the world Globalization has split transcontinental societies, whose projects have however preceded it: Brazil and Hispanic states converge in the Mercosur, and, in turn, the Francophony, the Commonwealth, the Lusophony and the panarabism having developed differentiated lines in the unity of the African continent (Moreira, 2004: 9). In addition, the Koran calls for the identity of a Muslim cord, which divides the world into north and south, from Gibraltar to Indonesia.

In these circumstances, it is certainly a challenging task to harmonize so many different and multiple affiliations, some based on experience and history, others induced by pressing readings of the future. Nowadays, all cultural areas speak for the first time with their own voice in the international scene and find themselves forced by globalization to the convergence derived from scientific, technical and

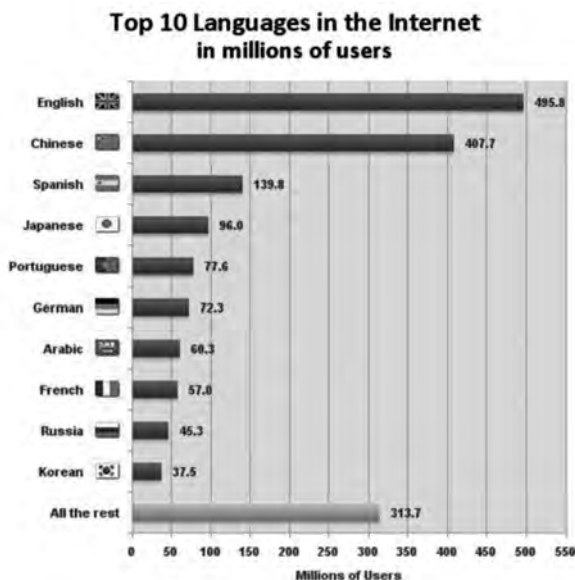
market development revolutions. In this context, each country will have to consider the connection to large differentiated spaces and, eventually, will also have to consider the connection to spaces with interests that may be contradictory.

To reflect on Lusophony we must consider the multitude of people who have Portuguese as their first language. There are 190 million Portuguese speakers, almost as many French speakers (110 million) and German (100 million) altogether. After Mandarin with 1,000 million speakers, Hindustani with 460 million, Spanish with 300 million, English with 350 million and Arabic with 200 million, Portuguese occupies the sixth place. However, in the global information age, it is impressive to know that the number of English total of speakers is 1000 million, while Hindustani is 650 million, French 500 million, Arabic 425 million, Spanish 320 million, Russian 280 million and Portuguese 230 million (http://wapedia.mobi/pt/L%C3%ADngua_mundial). But, on the other hand, English-speaking Internet users are 28% of the total, Chinese-speaking 23%, Spanish-speaking 8%, Japanese 5,3%, ahead of Portuguese-speaking, with only 4,3% of total Internet users. It is curious to note that users of the French language and Arabic are both slightly above 3%, overtaken by the German with 4% (www.internetworldstats.com/stats7.htm). The top 10 of Internet users by Language does not point out the number of Hindustani users. They are integrated in the category 'All the rest', which stands at 17.2%.

Language	Native speakers	Total of speakers
<u>English</u>		
<u>Mandarin</u>	1,000 M	1,051 M
<u>English</u>	350 M	1,000 M
<u>Hindustani</u>	460 M	650 M
<u>French</u>	110 M	500M
<u>Arab</u>	200 M	425 M
<u>Spanish</u>	300 M	320 M
<u>Russian</u>	165 M	280 M
<u>Portuguese</u>	190 M	230 M
<u>German</u>	100 M	150 M

Source: http://wapedia.mobi/pt/L%C3%ADngua_mundial [data for December 2009]

However, globalization and the communication paradigm of the network society, based on the convergence of media and the widespread use of information technology, summon a new place for the Lusophony. Cyberspace allows, in effect, the establishment of virtual networks of communication amongst citizens



Source: Internet World Stats - www.internetworldstats.com/stats7.html [Estimated Internet users are 1,802,330,457 for December 31, 2009]

who think, feel and speak in Portuguese. But the scientific community has a question to respond. We need to know what adds to the experience of Lusophony this new space where people of diverse backgrounds find themselves to share information, experiences, ideas and memories.

When we speak of information by the press, on radio and television, and also the Internet, we should be aware that the information refers to Languages that means we always need a natural language to disclose it. However, the pressure towards one language is going increases as the world becomes more global, with the speed of transport shrinking geographical distances and telecommunications networks spreading with higher bandwidth. But those who are committed to the Portuguese language have to be in this fight. And preserving a language, which is the peak of a culture, is to strive to fortify it in daily and global communication.

In this sense, it is the duty of speakers of a language, and therefore a task of citizenship, to nurture it and promote it, because it is in this language that we feel, think, express and communicate; it is in this language that lays the identity of a people, a culture and a civilization. More than any other speakers, media professionals, and also teachers of Portuguese language and culture are the active instruments of this language fortification. It is undeniable that the editorial exchange

between Portugal and Brazil, and also the exchange between these countries and African Portuguese-speaking ones, is still incipient. But it is expected that language works here as an important vehicle of trade, cultural and political development, in a time characterized by globalization, multiculturalism and interculturalism. These circumstances don't contradict, however, the need to consider multicultural national realities in different regions of the globe, in which the Portuguese language has to relate to other local languages and has come to compete with them in many cases.

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